

US 9-12

2024 Summer Reading Project

All Upper School students (9-12) will read a shared text with the goal of fostering conversation and community across the campus. Faculty and staff will also have an opportunity to share and be part of this collective experience.

This summer, we will be reading [*The House on Mango Street*](#) by Sandra Cisneros [ISBN 978-0679734772]. Cisneros is an internationally recognized American author of *The House on Mango Street*, a coming-of-age novel about a young Chicana girl's experience in her Chicago neighborhood. Cisneros reaches deep into her Chicana-Mexican heritage with writing that articulates displacement, longing, and the experiences of the forgotten or invisible of American society. She is one of several authors participating in this fall's Babel lineup sponsored by the [Just Buffalo Literary Center](#), an event students may be interested in attending.

Please remember that summer reading is an expectation of all students. We unequivocally believe that you continue to grow as readers and thinkers with each new book you pick up. The exposure to and study of complex ideas and artful writing often develops your own thinking and sophistication as a reader and writer.

DUE Date, Tuesday September 10



OCI Office of Inclusive Excellence

As you read, you should take notes to help your memory in September. Concepts to consider as you read:

Setting: details of time and place

Narrative Style: the point of view or structure, the language

Characters: the significant people/individuals in the novel. (Note: avoid only focusing on physical features. Instead, consider personality, motivation, relationships with others, changes over time)

Themes: major messages/points the author seems to be trying to convey. (see below "Thematic Reflection")

TASK:

Select ONE of the following prompts (AP Literature students choose two) and reflect critically on the themes and ideas that Cisneros develops in her memoir:

1. Memoir Vignettes (Creative Writing)

Using *The House on Mango Street* as a model, write your own vignette(s) about an important event or thing in your life. It might be a memory from your childhood or something that happened over the summer. You might choose something that took place at home, or outside in the community or neighborhood like Cisneros does and reflect on how it is meaningful and/or memorable to you. Dedicate a minimum of 2 handwritten pages or 500 words typed to your creative piece.

- A vignette is a short, well-written sketch or descriptive scene.
- It does not have a plot, which would make it a story, but it does reveal something about the elements of what you are writing
- It may reveal a character, or a mood, or tone
- It may have a theme or idea of its own that it wants to convey
- It is the description of the scene or character that is important

2. Artistic Representation (Creative Choice)

Respond artistically to a theme or scene from the novel that speaks to you. This may include an extended [art/writing journal](#) of creative reflection that addresses one or more themes, a zine, painting, sculpture, collage, musical piece, or other form of art.

In considering *The House on Mango Street*, you may want to use the “importance of story,” images, impressions, or setting as a focus for the art journal page(s). You may also choose to consider a collage of several etched ideas from the text (a quote, symbols, characters, conflict, or motifs). These are only ideas...be creative. You should complete at least one full art journal page/piece to submit.

In addition to the artistic piece, you need to include a one paragraph summary (10-12 sentences) of what is being represented in your work (color choice, reasoning behind selection, clarify any/all elements you included and why) and reflect on how your work connects with the text.

3. Thematic Reflection (Critical Writing)

Select two or three themes that you see recurring in the memoir and examine how they show up in your own life, in your community, or within the national discourse. *How does the book affect you personally?* Dedicate a minimum of 2 handwritten pages or 500 words typed to EACH of the themes you choose.

- Belonging/Heritage/Home- *How do you define home? Why does home matter?*
- Reclaiming Identity- *Where does our identity come from? What identities, if any, are permanent? How do other people's opinions shape and form us?*
- Power of Family & Community- *What role in shaping who we become? Is there something in your community or neighborhood that is significant to you? What is it? Why is it so important? What are the effects of stereotypes? (neighborhood vs. individual)*
- Bildungsroman- *How is this novel representative of someone's growth from childhood to maturity?*
- Importance of Women in a Culture- *What it means to be young & female in America...What are societal roles of women in the novel?*

Student Rubric

	Does not meet expectation	Meets expectation	Exceeds expectation
Student work meets the length/component requirements for selected tasks.			
Student demonstrates thoughtful engagement with, and thorough understanding of, source material.			
(For tasks 1 and 2 only) Creative choices reflect a serious engagement with the prompt.			
(For task 3 only) Thematic analysis is supported by textual evidence.			